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RICH AND POOR IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

by

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- Isaiah 24-27
- Daniel
- Zechariah 12-14
- I Enoch
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- Assumption of Moses
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INTRODUCTION

This study (while perhaps an exhausting one) is not an exhaustive study of apocalypticism, or even of the social and political implications of that movement, but is an examination of the chief Jewish and Christian apocalyptic writings with special reference to the attitude expressed and implied toward rich and poor. While numerous studies in the apocalypses have been made during the past generation, flooding light on two centuries which had been looked upon as resting forever in obscurity, very little attention has been directed toward this particular problem, which seems to be one of real significance. With the evidence that we now have of the influence of I Enoch upon the gospel writers and their eschatology, of the influence of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs in preparing the way for the great ethical advance we see in the New Testament, of the many influences of this literature upon incipient Christianity, we may well ask as to whether this apocalyptic literature has anything to contribute toward a social gospel. It will be our purpose in this discussion to open the door a little way and look within, discovering if we can whether there is in this treasure-house anything that may

add to our store of knowledge upon this particular point.

It may be well to divide our study into several divisions, taking up:

I. The use of the terms rich and poor in the Old Testament, with special reference to whether they had primarily an economic or a religious content.

II. A consideration of the roots and character of the apocalyptic movement, the conditions out of which it grew, and its general outlook and emphasis.

III. An examination of passages from several of the most important apocalypses, which indicate the attitude of the writers toward rich and poor.

IV. A summary and evaluation of the results of the examination.

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT USE OF THE TERMS RICH AND POOR

One of the first things that manifests itself in human society is the fact of inequality; inequality of opportunity, inequality of capacity, inequality of position and possessions. The literature of no race can be read very far without discovering the existence in the society of that race of at least the germs of class consciousness, the recognitions of distinctions between privileged and oppressed, between rich and poor. The history of every people records the story of the violation of the weak by the strong, the conflict between the disadvantaged and the powerful.

Throughout the Old Testament this distinction is everywhere in evidence. Constantly the law reminds the rich and powerful that he must do justice to the poor; in thunderous voice the prophet cries out against the oppression of the weak by the strong, the robbing of the poor by the rich. Over and over again the virtue of relieving the wants of the needy is extolled. No one can read the Psalms without feeling the passionate class consciousness that breathes from their verses. References to the rich, as such, are not particularly numerous; but the Old

Testament writings abound in references to the poor and to those who do them violence, the "haughty", the "proud".

Perhaps the best study in English of the use of the word "poor" in the Old Testament is to be found in the brief article on that subject in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible[1], by Dr. S.R. Driver, who discusses the meanings that attach to the various words translated in our Bible, "poor". The words used are 'ani, 'ebyon, and dal.

The word 'ani, usually translated "afflicted" or "poor", really means "one humbled or bowed down" by oppression and deprivation of rights and also by misfortune. As those thus oppressed would naturally be in poverty, the word came to have the meaning, "poor". But Driver reminds us that "'ani does not really mean 'poor', and that while in the English word 'poor' the prominent idea is the poverty of the person or persons so described, in the Hebrew 'ani the prominent idea is that of the ill-treated, or the miserable; in other words, the 'ani, while often no doubt, a person in need, was primarily a person suffering some kind of social disability or distress."[2] The Hebrew word which denotes poverty

1. Vol.IV. p.191.
2. Op. cit., p.19.

is rash, a word used very seldom in the Old Testament except in Proverbs. Its antithesis is ashir, rich, which is never used as the opposite of 'ani, as Rahlfs has pointed out.[1]

Driver then proceeds to show that the words for "poor" underwent some important changes in emphasis and signification in the period of the writing of the Old Testament. He says that 'ani, its parallel, 'ebyon, the needy and less distinctly dal, the reduced, "came gradually to imply more than persons who were merely in some kind of social subjection or material need: they came to denote the godly poor, the suffering righteous, the persons who whether 'bowed down' or 'needy' or 'reduced' were the godly servants of Jehovah". Rahlfs points out that 'ani thus acquired "not a religious meaning but a religious coloring". Driver carefully distinguishes between 'ani, the "bowed down" and 'anaw, the humble, one who bows himself voluntarily under the hand of God. The latter word always had a moral significance; the former came to acquire it. Driver's conclusion is that the 'ani and the 'anaw constituted "a party in ancient Israel, which appears to have first begun to form itself during the period of the later pre-exilic prophets, but which, during the exile and subsequently, acquired a more marked

1. Ibid., p.19

and distinctive character --- the party, viz., of the faithful and God-fearing Israelites, who held together and formed an 'ecclediola in ecclesia', as opposed to the worldly and indifferent, often also paganizing and persecuting, majority".[1] This idea of the party of "the poor" has also been put forward by prominent French and German scholars.

This use of the terms, which, I think, must serve as a background against which we are to understand many references in the apocalypses is clearly to be seen in the Psalms, most of which we must recognize as of post-exilic origin, many of them out of the very atmosphere and perhaps group from which apocalyptic writings came. A marked apocalyptic tinge is seen to many of the later Psalms.[2]

In his "Jewish Religious Life After the Exile", T.K.Cheyne pictures to us something of the social situation of the time and brings out forcibly the relations of rich and poor. He says: "Most of the Judeans in the first half of the fifth century were the children of those who had been left behind by Nebuchadnezzar, and were by no means faithful adherents of the Deuteronomic law. Neither rich nor poor could stand a very strict scrutiny. Then, as afterwards, the rich were specially prone to sins of

1. Ibid.,p.20.
2. Psalms 113, 149,110, 86, etc.

violence and inhumanity, while the poor were as much addicted to old and new superstitions. Exceptions, however, there certainly were. Malachi calls such persons "fearers of Jehovah"[1] and intimates that they belonged to the poorer class. These poor but pious men appear to have been lightly esteemed by their neighbors, who ascribed their unprosperous and even miserable condition to the judgment of God, while the tyrannical rich men, to rid themselves of these troublesome non-conformists, sometimes accused them falsely before the judges, and obtained their condemnation to death."[2] Elsewhere he says: "It may further be admitted that the pious were to some extent the authors of their own misery. They had no political insight and were incapable of practical compromise; they had also an absolute distaste for commerce, and were strangers to the arts of the marketplace. The result was that both politically and commercially they were pushed to the wall, not only by foreigners but by men of their own race. It was this indeed which made their feelings so bitter --- that men who called themselves Jews should associate with the heathen and adopt their worldly principles --- that all the zeal of Nehemiah and Ezra should have failed to realize the noble ideal of the church-nation. -------Against all these classes --- lukewarm or faithless Jews, who cared only for their

1.Mal.3:16; 4:2.
2.Op. cit.,pp. 85-86.

own profit, and scrupled not to cheat and impoverish their brethren, irritated and malicious neighbors, heartless and tyrannical rulers,--- the psalmists hurled the most violent epithets,-- 'wicked', 'impious', 'doers of evil', 'men of blood', 'speakers of lies', 'proud', 'braggarts', 'scorners', 'enemies to Jehovah', 'rebels', 'causeless enemies', 'those that return evil for good': from a religious and moral point of view they could see no difference between them. Neither faithless Jew nor tyrannical ruler believes in the divine government of the world."[1]

Some further elements innthe situation as set forth by Cheyne are these. "The scorn of the wicked rich for the righteous poor shows itself in one rather singular way. It seems as if the wicked preferred to use mean and disgraceful methods wherever they could. They sought to lull the righteous into a false security by professing to be their friends. Threachery plays a large part in the story of the Maccabees, and there is only too much reason to believe that the dread of it always lay in the back-ground of the Jewish mind."[2] Quoting Psalm 35[11] he says, "Here we have reference to a common practice of avaricious and powerful men --- to accuse innocent persons of some crime, such as theft, with the view of obtaining double restitution."[3]

1. Ibid - pp.114, 115.
2. Ibid - p.120
3. Ibid - p.121.

"Under these circumstances normal business relations between the two parties were impossible. Even if the Psalmists exaggerate when they deny their opponents the least vestige of honesty (Ps.12[1]) yet this very exaggeration bears witness to a social injustice which is inconsistent with commerce. The petty details of commercial unfairness are not given. But we <u>are</u> told that 'extortion and deceit depart not from the market-place'(Ps.55[11]). No doubt this extortion was largely connected with money-lending. To lend money gratuitously to faithful Jews was meritorious (Ps.37[26], 112[5]) while to require usury was as bad as taking a bribe against the innocent (Ps.15[5])". [1]

These quotations are sufficient, I believe, to indicate something of the character of the social situation and the meaning of"rich" and "poor" as applied to the social groups in post-exilic times. Differences were political, economic, social, religious. The division into the rich and the poor is not an exhaustive classification. There were doubtless a few among the rich and influential who could be counted among the righteous; certainly the majority among the impoverished elements of society did not share in the passion for righteousness and justice which the Psalmists voiced. The

1. Ibid - p.122.

"poor" at this period must be as Cheyne terms them, "the inner circle, the few really fine grapes on the cluster". We may think of them as a minority party, the party of the "pious", the "godly", the "righteous".

II. THE NATURE OF THE APOCALYPTIC MOVEMENT[1]

It was out of a situation such as this that the apocalyptic movement came -- assituation in which not only the chosen nation, Israel, suffered at the hands of the heathen, but the "poor", the "righteous" suffered at the hands of the "rulers" and the "violent". All of this demanded an explanation. How could it be? According to the philosophy of Israel the righteous nation and individual was rewarded by prosperity and wealth; impoverishment, oppression, suffering, these were the results of sin and wrongdoing.[2] The suffering came as a chastisement of God, to set the wrongdoer again in the way of right.[3] There was no thought of a future life, all rewards and punishments were in this present world. Yet the chosen people through generations was held in subjection to foreign peoples, and the success of the unrighteous was everywhere to be seen and suffering and oppression were the common lot of the righteous. How could it be? Job had come as a protest against this all but universal attitude. The

1. See McCown, PHC, pp.89-139; Charles, Rel. Development, pp. 12-46.
2. Charles, op.cit., pp.104ff.
3. II Mac. VI:2-16.

Scribes had failed adequately to explain how a righteous God and the suffering of the righteous were compatible. And now comes the apocalyptic movement with its attempted explanation. Its problem was: How can men keep faith in a just God in the midst of such a world of injustice?

The very foundation, then, of apocalypticism was a matter of class consciousness, a sense of the difference between Israel and heathendom and between the righteous and the oppressor. Facts had to be faced. Distinctions of class and condition could not be overlooked. Differences were there. What was the way out?

Out from the ranks of the suffering righteous an answer came, came in the form of the apocalyptic movement, a movement for which the way had been paved by some of the later prophets, -- viz. the late additions to Isaiah, portions of Ezekiel and the book of Joel. The apocalyptists came as the successors to the prophets -- sharing with them many of their most glorious ideals, differing from them on some points, seeming to withdraw from the program of the prophets in the remaking of the world, and yet in some respects going beyond them and preparing the way for the flood of light that was to come in the revelations of Christianity.

Some clear distinctions may be kept in mind as to the differences between prophet and apocalyptist.[1] The prophet dealt with society in the large, with the problems of the nation, his hope was a national hope; the apocalyptist dealt as well with the individual, the problem of the suffering of the righteous individual, the hope and punishment of the individual. The prophet wrote under his own name; the apocalyptic writings are pseudepigraphic, purporting to be the work of some ancient seer, some worthy who wrought in the distant past. The prophet was more or less an optimist, he held out the hope that out of all the chaos and suffering of the present a world of justice and brotherhood was eventually to come; even his blackest prophecies of destruction were subject to a stated or implied condition: if the nation repented the wrath of Jahveh would be turned aside. The apocalyptist was a pessimist,[2] to him the world was an evil thing, matters had come from bad to worse, more and more the just were made to suffer at the hands of the unjust; it had all got beyond the possibility of remedy; soon God would intervene and in a new world conditions would be reversed, the righteous would reign in glory, the evil would suffer forever.

1. Charles, op.cit., pp. 16ff; also, his article, Apoc.Lit., HDB, Vol.1, p.109f.
2. McCown, op.cit., p.130f.

The prophet made allowance for the repentance of the wicked, God would have mercy; all was not finally prearranged, but history was organic: future conditions were the outgrowth of the present. The apocalyptist was a determinist, his conception of history was mechanical: at the proper time God would intervene and all would suddenly be changed. The prophet dealt with the things of earth; the interest of the apocalyptist was supramundane.

These writings could only have come from one group in Israel, from the "godly poor", the "righteous",[1] the "Chasidim". They came from that group from which the Pharisees later came, the lovers of the Law, the really religious Jews. The apocalypses could only come from those who so suffered under social handicaps that their suffering should cause them to cry out in protest against injustice. The apocalyptic movement came as the voice of the downtrodden, the poor, the under dogs of Jewish society. The majority of the Pharisees, from the middle and upper classes, felt little injustice in the social and religious order of the day; they prospered, their righteousness was thus proved; their prosperity was the evidence of God's approval, it was not for them to worry about their less fortunate fellows. The Sadducees, rulers and

1. Ibid., p.114.

leaders of the people, laid burdens upon the poor and were wholly unsympathetic toward any social reform. They were the oppressors, the "haughty", the "sinners". But from among the submerged groups, the oppressed, the sufferers from social injustices, there came the voice of the descendants of the prophets --- speaking in the name of ancient patriarchs because the Scribes had taught that now all prophecy had ceased, that all that remained was the study and interpretation of the Torah. These apocalyptic voices spoke not with the same high hope and confidence of the prophets of the past; they spoke in vision nad figure hard to be understood by the occidental mind, in figure often wierd and grotesque, yet sounding the one clear ethical and social note that came from these troublous times.

This discussion, of course, does not cover the whole range of apocalypticism. We are not dealing with its theology, its conceptions of the Messiah and the Kingdom, its development of the idea of a resurrection, its demonology and angelology, its ethics, -- our interest is in apocalypticism as a social movement, the outgrowth of social conditions, the expression of a class consciousness. This is only one phase of the movement, but a very important and largely neglected phase.

It is not in all of the apocalypses that we

find the social idea most prominent. In some the discussion is largely metaphysical,as in the early chapters of I Enoch (1-36) and chapters 72 - 82 of the same book; in some, the prominent idea is that between the Israelitish nation and the nations of the earth, as in Daniel and IV Ezra; in some there is a large element of the theological, as in II Baruch and large parts of IV Ezra; but in others, particularly those written in the first century B.C., as I Enoch 37 - 71 and 91 - 104 and the Psalms of Solomon, we discover that the underlying idea is that of the difference between rich and poor and the coming of judgment upon the workers of injustice and iniquity.

The apocalypses to be considered include the earliest writings of this type, products of the fourth century B.C., Isaiah 24-27 and the book of Joel; the apocalypses of the second century B.C., Daniel, portions of I Enoch, Zechariah 12-14, and most of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; those of the first century B.C., I Enoch 1-5, 37-71, and 91 - 104, and the Psalms of Solomon; and those of the first century A.D., the Assumption of Moses, II Baruch, IV Ezra, and Revelation. In some of them we shall find very little that bears upon our theme; in others it is the one predominant note.

Of one thing we can be sure -- that out of

the social situation of the time there came this literature that was to permeate Jewish thought and to have a significant place in the moulding of the thought of the early Christian leaders. The suffering and disappointment of the times had issued in this pessimistic, deterministic utterance, this counsel of despair, which was yet the clearest voice of faith coming from later pre-Christian Judaism --- a voice that said that even though affairs had come to such a pass that they could not be righted, that yet God would over-throw this old evil order and give in its stead a new world of righteousness, a world in which the kings, the rich and powerful, the oppressors of the poor would be made to suffer, and in which the righteous would "shine as stars forever".

We proceed now to the consideration of various passages in the apocalypses.

III. AN EXAMINATION OF PASSAGES FROM THE APOCALYPSES

It is difficult to know the most satisfactory way in which to take up this study of passages; perhaps there is none. So we shall consider the various apocalypses as nearly as possible in chronological order, quoting passages that throw any light on our subject, remembering that we are considering not only poverty and wealth, but the whole idea of class consciousness between the weak and the strong, the oppressed and the powerful. The dating of some of the apocalypses is uncertain, and some are of composite authorship, covering a considerable period of time in composition. But we can approximate the dates.

As we come to the earliest apocalyptic writings we find nothing in the book of Joel that bears directly on our theme so we shall consider

ISAIAH 24 - 27.

Critics have had considerable difficulty in dating the prophecy, some with Cheyne putting it about 350 B.C., some, I believe, putting it considerably later, but practically all placing it somewhere in the post-exilic period. In it we find used all three of the terms applied to the poor, considered above,

dal, 'ebyon, and 'ani.[1] It is an apocalyptic presentation of the deliverance of the righteous; God is the helper of the poor and the punisher of the haughty.

"And it shall come to pass in that day , that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth".[2]

"For Thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. As the heat in a dry place wilt thou bring down the noise of the strangers; as the heat by the shade of a cloud, the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low."[3]

"For He hath brought down them that dwell on high, the lofty city; He layeth it low, He layeth it low even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down; even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy."[4]

DANIEL

In the book of Daniel, written during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, 165 B.C.[5], we discover

1.G.A.Smith, Isaiah, Exp.Bible, Vol.1,p.433.
2.Isaiah 24:21.
3.Ibid.,25:4,5.
4.Ibid.,26: 5,6.
5.See Driver,L.O.T., on Daniel.

that the hope is primarily a national hope, there is very little mention of the groups within the nation. Only two passages have any bearing on our subject. One records a recommendation of Daniel to the King, setting forth the traditional Hebrew approval of almsgiving as one of the chief works of righteousness: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor."[1]

The other passage speaks disparagingly of those who have for profit acceded to the Hellenizing demands of Antiochus: "Whosoever acknowledgeth him he will increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price."[2]

In Zechariah 12 - 14 we find nothing that relates definitely to our problem, so we forego making any quotations from that source.

THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

This work whose ethics stands above that of any other pre-Christian writing, written all modern authorities agree about 109 B.C. with additions from later centuries, makes frequent reference to rich and poor.

There are numerous admonitions against the

1. Daniel 4:27
2. Ibid., 11:39

love of money:

"And now I command you, my children, not to love money."[1]

"Beware therefore, my children, of fornication and the love of money, and hearken unto Judah, your father."[2]

"For these things withdraw you from the Law of God,
And blind the inclination of the soul,
And teach arrogance,
And suffer not a man to have compassion upon his neighbor.
They rob his soul of all goodness,
And oppress him with toils and troubles
And drive away sleep from him,
And devour his flesh.
And he hindereth the sacrifices of God;
And he remembereth not the blessing of God.
He hearkeneth not to a prophet when he speaketh,
And resenteth the words of godliness.
For he is a slave to two contrary passions
And cannot obey God,
Because they have blinded his soul,
And he walketh in the day as in the night." [3]

"My children, the love of money leadeth to idolatry; because, when led astray through money, men name as gods those who are not gods, and it causeth him who hath it to fall into madness."[4]

1.T.Jud. 17:1
2.Ibid.,18:2
3.Ibid.,18:3-6
4.Ibid., 19:1

"The single-minded man covetheth not gold,
He overreacheth not his neighbor,
He longeth not after manifold dainties,
He delighteth not in varied apparel;"[1]

"The inclination of the good man is not in the power of the deceit of the spirit of Beliar, for the angel of peace guideth his soul. And he gazeth not passionately upon corruptible things, nor gathereth together riches through a desire of pleasure. He delighteth not in pleasure, he sateth not himself with luxuries, he erreth not in the uplifting of his eyes, for the Lord is his portion."[2]

Compassion for the poor is commended:

"For on all the poor and oppressed I bestowed the good things of the earth in the singleness of my heart."[3]

"But love the Lord and your neighbor. Have compassion on the poor and weak."[4]

"If any man were in distress I joined my sighs with his, and I shared my bread with the poor."[5]

"Do you, therefore, my children, from that which God bestoweth upon you, show compassion and mercy without hesitation to all men, and give to every man with a good heart. And if ye have not the wherewithal to give to him that needeth, have

1.T.Issachar,4:2 3.T.Issachar,3:8
2.T.Benj.,6:1-3 4.Ibid., 5:2
5.Ibid., 7

compassion for him in bowels of mercy."[1]

"For in the degree in which a man hath compassion upon his neighbors, in the same degree hath the Lord also upon him."[2]

Those who are in poverty are urged not to be jealous of the rich:

"If anyone is glorified, he (the good man) envieth him not; if any one is enriched, he is not jealous; if anyone is valiant, he praiseth him; the virtuous man he laudeth; on the poor man he hath mercy; on the weak, he hath compassion; unto God he singeth praises."[3]

"If a man prospereth more than you, do not be vexed, but pray also for him, that he may have perfect prosperity."[4]

"And though a man become rich by evil means, even as Esau, the brother of my father, be not jealous; but wait for the end of the Lord. For if he taketh away from a man wealth gotten by evil means, He forgiveth him if he repent, but the unrepentant is reserved for eternal punishment. For the poor man, if free from envy he pleaseth the Lord in all things, is blessed beyond all men, because he hath not the travail of vain men."[5]

1.T.Zeb.,7:2,3
2.Ibid.,8:3
3.T.Benj.,4:4
4.T.Gad, 7:1
5.Ibid.,7:4-6

Justice as well as almsgiving is demanded:

"Another stealeth, doeth unjustly, plundereth, defraudeth, and withal pitieth the poor: this too hath a two-fold aspect but the whole is evil. He who defraudeth his neighbor provoketh God, and sweareth falsely against the Most High, and yet pitieth the poor: the Lord who commandeth the Law he setteth at naught and provoketh, and yet he refresheth the poor. He defileth the soul and maketh glad the body; he killeth many, and pitieth a few; this, too, hath a two-fold aspect, but the whole is evil."[1]

The righteous poor will be rewarded:

"And they who were poor for the Lord's sake shall be made rich."[2]

The last quotation to be made from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs is an addition probably written sometime during the first century B.C., giving evidence of the oppression of that time.

"For the kings shall be as sea-monsters.
They shall swallow men like fishes:
The sons and daughters (of freemen) shall they enslave;
Houses, lands, flocks, money shall they plunder.

1.T.Asher, 2:5-7
2.T.Jud. 25:4

And with the flesh of many shall they wrongfully
feed the ravens and the cranes;
And they shall advance in evil, in covetousness uplifted,
And there shall be false prophets like tempests,
And they shall persecute all righteous men."[1]

I ENOCH

The Book of Enoch was written by different Chasid and Pharisaic writers between the early second century and the middle of the first century B.C. According to Dr. McCown the earliest section, Chapters 6 - 36, was written before 166 B.C. and the latest portion, Chapters 37 - 71, took form between 69 and 64 B.C.

The only verse in the earliest section that seems to indicate class consciousness is so altered in meaning by the later translation of Dr. Charles as it is to be found in his volume of Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, a translation based on more manuscripts and fuller knowledge than his translation published in 1893, that its bearing on our study is too uncertain to make its quotation worth while here.[2]

But the two sections in the Book of Enoch which reveal most clearly the bitterness of the struggle between the classes are the sections made

1.T.Jud. 21:7-9
2.I Enoch 10:16

up of Chapters 91-104, written before 95 B.C.[1] probably during the reign of John Hyrcanus and of Chapters 37-71, written under the later rulers of the Asmonean house. In the earlier of these divisions of the book is brought out clearly the conflict between the lovers of the Law, the "righteous poor" and the Sadducean leaders who were secretly encouraged and supported by the princes. In the later section the struggle has become more intense; it is no longer between the Pharisees and Sadducees, but between the righteous Pharisees, the faithful and the presumptuous and violent rulers of the Maccabean house who have no scruples in their dealings with "the poor". We shall consider first Chapters 91-104.

The writer tells of <u>the luxury and folly of the rich</u>.

"For ye men shall put on more adornments than a woman,
And colored garments more than a virgin:
In royalty, and in grandeur, and in power,
And in silver, and in gold, and in purple,
And in splendor and in food they shall be poured out as water.
Therefore they shall be wanting in doctrine and wisdom,
And they shall perish thereby together with their possessions,

1.Date according to McCown.

And with all their glory and their splendor,

And in shame and in slaughter and in great destitution

Their spirits shall be cast into the furnace of fire."[1]

Numerous woes are heaped upon the rich, for punishment is sure.

"Woe to those who build unrighteousness and oppression

And lay deceit as a foundation;

For they shall be suddenly overthrown

And shall have no peace.

Woe to those who build their houses with sin;

For from all their foundations shall they be overthrown,

And by the sword shall they fall.

And those who acquire gold and silver in judgment suddenly shall perish.

Woe to you ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches

And from your riches shall ye depart,

Because ye have not remembered the Most High in the days of your riches."[2]

Woe to you sinners, for ye persecute the righteous;

For ye shall be delivered up and persecuted because of injustice,

And heavy shall its yoke be upon you."[3]

"Woe unto you, ye sinners, for your riches make you appear like the righteous,

But your hearts convict you of being sinners,

1.I Enoch 98:2-3 2.Ibid.,94:6-8
3.Ibid., 95:7

And this fact shall be a testimony against you
for a memorial of your evil deeds.
Woe to you who devour the finest of the wheat
And drink wine in large bowls
And tread under foot the lowly with your might.
Woe to you who drink water from every fountain;
For suddenly shall ye be consumed and wither away
Because ye have forsaken the fountain of life.
Woe to you who work unrighteousness
And deceit and blasphemy:
It shall be a memorial against you for evil.
Woe to you, ye mighty,
Who with might oppress the righteous;
For the day of your destruction is coming.
In those days many and good days shall come to the
righteous --- in the day of your judgment."[1]

"Woe to you who acquire silver and gold in un-
righteousness, and say:
'We have become rich with riches and have possessions;
And have acquired everything we have desired:
And now let us do what we purposed:
For we have gathered silver
And many are the husbandmen in our houses.'
And our granaries are (brim) full as with water,

1.Ibid.,96:4-8

And like water your lies shall flow away;
For your riches shall not abide
But speedily ascend from you;
For ye have acquired it all in unrighteousness
And ye shall be given over to a great curse."[1]

"I have sworn unto you, ye sinners, by the Holy Great One
That all your evil deeds are revealed in the heavens,
And that none of your deeds of oppression are covered and hidden."[2]

"From henceforth ye know that all your oppression wherewith ye oppress is written down every day till the day of your judgment."[3]

"Woe to you who build your houses through the grievous toil of others,
And all their building materials are the bricks and stones of sin;
I tell you ye shall have no peace."[4]

The closing chapters (102-104) of this section are devoted to the encouragement of the righteous with the promise of their future reward and the future punishment of their oppressors.

"And now fear not, ye righteous, when ye see

1.Ibid.,97:8-10.
2.Ibid.,98:6
3.Ibid.,98:8.
4.Ibid.,99:13.

the sinners growing strong and prospering in their ways: be not companions with them, but keep afar from their violence; for ye shall become companions of the hosts of heaven."[1]

In the later section of the Book of Enoch the struggle has become more intense. The declarations of the righteous are no longer directed so much toward the "rich" as toward the "rulers and the mighty", who seem to be aiming at their extermination. The burden of this section is the punishment of the mighty for their acts of oppression.

"When the secrets of the righteous shall be revealed and the sinners judged,
And the godless driven from the presence of the righteous and elect,
From that time those that possess the earth shall no longer be powerful and exalted:
And they shall not be able to behold the face of the holy,
For the Lord of Spirits has caused his light to appear
On the face of the holy, righteous and elect.
Then shall the kings and the mighty perish
And be given into the hands of the righteous and holy."[2]

1. Ibid., 104:6
2. Ibid., 38:3-5

The moral level on which the writer moved was not so high that he was above finding great satisfaction in the thought of the oppressed getting their turn at being the oppressors.

"And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen
Shall raise up the kings and mighty from their seats
And the strong from their thrones,
And shall loosen the reins of the strong
And break the teeth of the sinners.
And he shall put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms
Because they do not extol and praise Him,
Nor humbly acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them.
And he shall put down the countenance of the strong
And shall fill them with shame.
And darkness shall be their dwelling,
And worms shall be their bed,
And they shall have no hope of rising from their beds,
Because they do not extol the name of the Lord of Spirits.
And these are they who judge the stars of heaven,
And raise their hands against the Most High,
And tread upon the earth and dwell upon it,
And all their deeds manifest unrighteousness:
And their power rests upon riches,
And their faith is in the gods which they have made with their hands,

And they deny the name of the Lord of Spirits,
And they persecute the houses of His congregations
And the faithful who hang upon the name of the
Lord of Spirits."[1]

"In these days downcast in countenance shall the
kings of the earth have become,
And the strong who possess the land because of the
works of their hands,
For on the day of their anguish and affliction they
shall not (be able to) save themselves.
And I will give them over into the hands of mine
elect:
As straw in the fire, so shall they burn before the
face of the holy:
As lead in the water shall they sink before the
face of the righteous,
And no trace of them shall anymore be found."[2]

It would be easy to add other quotations, but all are to the same effect, particularly chapters 53, 62 and 63. One more passage will suffice.

"And thus the Lord commanded the kings and the mighty and the exalted, and those who dwell on the earth, and said:
'Open your eyes and lift up your horns if ye are able
to recognize the Elect One.'

1.Ibid.,46:4-8 2.Ibid.,48:8-9

And the Lord of Spirits seated him on the throne
of His glory,
And the spirit of righteousness was poured out
upon him,
And the word of his mouth slays all the sinners,
And all the unrighteous are destroyed from before
his face.
And then shall stand up in that day all the kings
and the mighty,
And the exalted and those who hold the earth,
And they shall see and recognize
How he sits on the throne of his glory,
And righteousness is judged before him,
And no lying word is spoken before him.
Then shall pain come upon them as on a woman in
travail,
When her child enters the mouth of the womb,
And she has pain in bringing forth.
And one portion of them shall look on the other,
And they shall be terrified,
And they shall be downcast of countenance,
And pain shall seize them,
When they see that Son of Man
Sitting on the throne of his glory.
And the kings and the mighty and all who possess the
earth shall bless and glorify and extol him who
rules over all, who was hidden.

And all the kings and the mighty and the exalted
and those who rule the earth
Shall fall down before him on their faces,
And worship and set their hope upon that Son of Man,
And petition him and supplicate for mercy at his
hands.
Nevertheless that Lord of Spirits will so press them
That they shall hastily go forth from His presence,
And their faces shall be filled with shame,
And the darkness grow deeper on their faces.
And He will deliver them to the angels for punishment,
To execute vengeance on them because they have op-
pressed His children and His elect.
And they shall be a spectacle for the righteous and
for His elect:
They shall rejoice over them,
Because the wrath of the Lord of Spirits resteth
upon them,
And His sword is drunk with their blood."[1]

PSALMS OF SOLOMON

These pseudepigraphic Psalms come from the hand of one of the "godly poor" who wrote between the years 70 and 40 B.C. It is quite possible that he was a member of the priesthood. His chief purpose, apparently, is to protest against the cor-

1.Ibid., 62:1-6, 9-12

rupting influences of the Asmonean party, the Sadducees.

Speaking of the haughtiness of the leaders, he says:

"Their riches were gone forth into all the world,
and their glory unto the ends of the earth.
They were lifted up to the stars; they said: 'We
shall never fall'.
But they waxed haughty in their prosperity and were
not able to endure."[1]

He draws clearly the distinction between the "righteous" and the "sinners".

"Bless ye God, ye that fear the Lord with understanding; for the mercy of the Lord is with
judgment upon them that fear Him,
To separate between the righteous and the sinner,
to recompense unto the sinners forever according to their works,
And to show mercy unto the righteous because of
their oppression by the sinner, and to recompense unto the sinner in return for that
which he hath done unto the righteous."[2]

God is "a refuge for the needy".[3]

The writer advocates the golden mean.

"If a man abound beyond measure, he sinneth.
Sufficient is a moderate provision with righteousness; and herein is the blessing of the

1.Ps.of Sol.1:4-6 2.Ibid.,2:37-39
3.Ibid.,5:2

Lord, that a man be satisfied in righteousness.
They that fear the Lord rejoice in prosperity, and
thy loving kindness is upon Israel in Thy
Kingdom."[1]

The poverty of the righteous is a chastisement that will make for their salvation.

"For if Thou strengthenest not, who can abide chastisement in poverty?
Seeing that a soul is rebuked by the corruption
thereof; thou dost prove a man in his flesh
and in the affliction of poverty;
The righteous man if he continue steadfast, shall
therein find mercy with the Lord."[2]

"For the Lord will spare his saints, and will blot
out their transgressions with his chastening;
for the life of the righteous is forever.
But sinners shall be taken away unto destruction;
and the memorial of them shall no more be found.
But upon the saints is the mercy of the Lord; yea,
upon them that fear him is his mercy".[3]

The Psalmist, as one of the "righteous", rejoices in the downfall of the Asmoneans:

"But when we sinned, sinners rose up against us;
they fell upon us and thrust us out; even they,
to whom thou madest no promise, took away
our place with violence.

1.Ibid.,5:19-21 2.Ibid.,16:13-15
3.Ibid.,13:9-11

And they esteemed not thy glorious name in any honor; they preferred a kingdom to that which was their excellency.

They laid waste the throne of David with a tumultuous shout of triumph.

But Thou, O God, didst cast them down, and remove their seed from off the earth."[1]

THE ASSUMPTION OF MOSES

This apocalypse is the work of a Pharisaic quietist who probably wrote during the life time of our Lord, between A.D.7 and A.D.30.[2] He is a patriotic Jew but not a Zealot, and his antagonism to the powerful Sadducees is clearly evidenced.

"And in the time of these, destructive and impious men shall rule, saying that they are just. And these shall stir up the poison of their minds, being treacherous men, self-pleasers, dissemblers in all their own affairs, lovers of banquets at every hour of the day, gluttons, gourmands ------ Devourers of the goods of the poor, saying that they do so on the ground of their justice, but in reality to destroy them, complainers, deceitful, concealing themselves lest they should be recognized, impious, filled with lawlessness and iniquity from sunrise to sunset: saying: 'We shall have

1.Ibid., 17:6-8
2.Charles,Pseud.Vol.2,p.411

feastings and luxury, eating and drinking, and we shall esteem ourselves as princes."[1]

II BARUCH

In this work, a composite writing dating from the last half of the first century A.D.,[2] we have one of the greatest of the Jewish apocalypses, written by orthodox Jews of the type against whom Paul's argument was directed. There is not an indication here of the intense class consciousness which found expression in the apocalypses of the previous century; but that this consciousness was present in the writers' mind is evidenced by the discussion of the suffering righteous found in Chapters 14 and 15. "The righteous are carried off, and the impious are prospered."[3]

The problem is the same as in all this type of literature: how can God be righteous and permit the impious to prosper while good men suffer. And the answer is the same.

"For now it is the consummation of time that should be considered, whether of business, or of prosperity, or of shame, and not the beginning thereof. Because if a man be prospered in his beginnings and shamefully entreated in his old age, he forgets all the prosperity that he had. And again, if a man is shamefully treated in his be-

1.Assumption Mos.,7:3-9
2.Charles, Pseud.,Vol.2
3.II Baruch 15:2

ginnings, and at his end is prospered, he remembereth not again his evil entreatment. And again hearken: though each one were prospered all the time --- all the time from the day on which death was decreed against those who transgress --- and in the end was destroyed, in vain would have been everything."[1]

IV EZRA

The problem that is faced in this book, in many ways the most beautiful of the apocalypses, is that which is common to all this literature, the problem of the suffering of the righteous. But for this writer --- or writers, rather, for the book is a composite work --- there is no division into the "rich" and "poor", the "righteous" and "sinners" among the Jews: for the apocalyptist there are now only two groups, the Jews and the heathen; righteous Israel and her evil oppressors. By the time of this writing, which was after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, the Sadducees had ceased to be an effective factor in Jewish life, so the references to righteous and unrighteous can only refer to Israel and the heathen nations. It is interesting to note while passing that in an unusual way for an apocalyptist the writer of IV Ezra over and over again identifies himself with the sinners, acknowledging the sins of the Jewish nation:

1. II Baruch 19:5-8

he thinks of the sins of all Israel and of the amazing grace of God that will deliver the chosen nation in spite of its shortcomings, that will give the nation peace, prosperity and joy in the world to come.

THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE[1]

When we come to the Christian apocalypses we find the same element of sympathy with an oppressed class that predominates in the Jewish apocalyptic literature; but it is no longer a conflict between poor and righteous Pharisees and rich and wicked Sadducees and rulers, but rather between the poor and oppressed followers of Christ and the powerful opponents of Christianity, whether Jewish, Roman or pagan.

In the Little Apocalypse, early incorporated into Mark and adopted by Matthew and Luke, we find the following reflection of this condition: "You yourselves must be on your guard. They will deliver you up to Sanhedrins; you will be brought into synagogues and cruelly beaten; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to be witnesses to them for me. ------- When, however, they are marching you along under arrest, do not be anxious before hand about what you are to say,

1.Mk.13, Matt.24, Lk.21, - see, Moffatt,I.L.N.T.,pp.207-209

but speak what is given you when the time comes; for it will not be you who speak, but the Holy Spirit."[1]

REVELATION

Here the distinction is not one of wealth and poverty, of high or low degree: rather again it is that of saint and sinner, suffering Christian and heathen persecutor. The whole book is the heart cry of a saint who despairs at the fearful trials through which he and his fellows must pass, who feels that this world is hopeless, but is certain that in the new Jerusalem, "the city of God coming down out of Heaven", all will be well for the saint, and that in that day the oppressor will be destroyed. The old class distinctions have vanished; now the Christian stands over against those who would destroy him.

Says Dr.Cone in his "Rich and Poor in the New Testament": "The revelator sees the kings of the earth, the great, the rich, the mighty men, hiding themselves with the slaves in the great day of wrath from the destroying fury of the Lamb;[2] the small and great, the rich and poor, the free and bond, receive the mark of the beast;[3] and among the saints are reckoned those of high and low degree."[4,5]

1.Mark 13:9,11(Weymouth) 3.Ibid.,13:16
2.Rev.6:15 4.Ibid.,11:18
5.Cone,op. cit.,p.182

This completes the presentation of the chief passages in the apocalypses examined which have any immediate bearing on our problem. It would be interesting to trace parallels between these and statements in the New Testament, but that would be rather beside our purpose here. However, before we proceed to a brief consideration of the results of our study it may not be amiss to set down two or three of the chief reflections of the class consciousness characteristic of apocalypticism which find expression on the pages of the New Testament.

Perhaps the clearest expressions of this point of view are to be found in the Synoptic Gospels and the Epistle of James, although some indications of it are to be found in most of the New Testament books. We note that in the Gospels, while there is a wonderful universality of appeal and sympathy, there is a recognition of class differences, a special sympathy for the needy.

The burden of the Synoptics, then, is that the message of the coming Kingdom was a message for the poor and the oppressed. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me,.for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light".[1]

1. Matt.11:28-30

The kindly disposition of Jesus toward poverty and his antipathy toward or fear of wealth is evident in both Matthew and Luke and we cannot but believe that the general attitude of the Master is here rightly portrayed. While he points out the perils of wealth, of the love of riches and of the giving free rein to the acquisitive instinct as among the chief barriers to entrance into the kingdom, he says nothing so far as we can learn concerning the temptations and perils of poverty. His idea is not that of the apocalyptists (although the parable of Dives and Lazarus might give such an idea) that the prosperity and blessing of the poor in the Kingdom is simply the balancing of the ledger, the giving to the needy of the things he was denied in this life and the depriving of the rich of those things that have been his portion. But rather his position seems to be that the poor because of the injustices that have been done them are more receptive of the message of the kingdom, while the self-satisfaction and opulent ease of the rich have closed their hearts to the good news.

It was doubtless the recognition of this difference in receptiveness, linked with a sympathy for all who suffered, which caused Jesus to utter the beatitudes and woes which we find in Luke's account of the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are

ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh..... But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep."[1]

The Epistle of James is full of the class conscious: while it would break down the barriers between rich and poor, his sympathy is ever with the suffering and needy. "My brethren, you must not make distinctions between one man and another while you are striving to maintain faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our glory. For suppose a man comes into one of your meetings wearing gold rings and fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man wearing shabby clothes, and you pay court to the one who wears the fine clothes, and say, 'Sit here; this is a good place;' while to the poor man you say, 'Stand there, or sit on the floor at my feet;' is it not plain that in your hearts you have little faith, seeing that you have become judges full of wrong thoughts? Listen, my dearly beloved brethren, Has not God chosen those whom the world regards as poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him? But you have put dishonor upon the poor man. Yet is it not the rich who grind you down? Are not they

1.Luke 6:20-21,24,25

the very people who drag you into the Law courts? --- and the very people who speak evil of the noble Name by which you are called?"[1]

"Come, you rich men, weep aloud and howl for your sorrows which will soon be upon you. Your treasures have rotted, and your piles of clothing are moth-eaten; your gold and your silver have become covered with rust, and the rust on them will give evidence against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded up wealth in these last days. I tell you that the pay of the laborers who have gathered in your crops -- pay which you are keeping back -- is calling out against you; and the outcries of those who have been your reapers have entered into the ears of the Lord of the armies of Heaven. Here on earth you have lived self-indulgent and profligate lives. You have stupefied yourselves with gross feeding; but a day of slaughter has come. You have condemned -- you have murdered -- the righteous man: he offers no resistance.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, until the Coming of the Lord. Notice how eagerly a farmer waits for a valuable crop! He is patient over it until it has received the early and the later rain. So you also must be patient: keeping up your courage; For the coming of the Lord is now close at hand."[2]

1.James 2:1-6
2.Ibid.,5:1-8

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As we consider the passages quoted as well as the whole atmosphere of the apocalypses (a thing we cannot confine and quote), the conclusions that we reach concerning the writers' attitudes toward rich and poor, their social interests, are quite what we should expect from men in their times, facing their conditions, and holding their religious faith.

If we are searching for their teaching on and attitude toward poverty and wealth in the sense in which we usually use those words, we find comparatively little; but what little we find is favorable to the poor. We may perhaps summarize the whole position of the writers above quoted in this way: Riches are not to be sought after; moderate means is ample for any man; nor are the poor to envy the rich, for riches are conducive to pride and haughtiness and make one forget God; and other things are more worth while and more enduring, for suddenly the wealth of the rich will be taken from him, but righteousness cannot be taken away; if, however, a man has wealth, he should use it for the relief of the needy.

From all this we may gather that the sympathy of the writers went out to the poor; that they had suffered with them, that they shared their point of view; that there could not but be in their hearts at least a little bitterness toward those who gained their wealth at the expense of the poor and turned a deaf ear toward the cry of the poverty stricken and oppressed. The natural sympathies of the apocalyptists go out to the materially poor.

But when we come to the terms "rich" and "poor" as we have seen we have good reason to suppose they had come to be used in later pre- Christian times ---- terms standing for the violent, oppressing rich and the godly, suffering poor, the classes of the irreligious, the Hellenizers, the persecuting rulers, against the faithful, God-fearing, Law-abiding, "bowed down" poor ---- then we discover that the whole apocalyptic movement sprang out of this difference and was an attempt to explain it in such way as to make possible the retention of faith in a righteous God.

The struggle between rich and poor becomes not essentially a social and economic struggle, although this had its place as we have seen, but social and economic only as these were the outgrowth of its religious aspects. Whether it was a strife between nations or individuals, whether it was a struggle against Antiochus in his efforts to

destroy the faithful, or a battle against the rich and unscrupulous Sadducees or false highpriests and violent rulers in the first century B.C., or a conflict with persecuting Jews or godless Gentiles or an all-compelling Roman Empire in the first century of our era --- still it was the same battle, the struggle of the underdog against hopeless odds; a struggle in which the pessimism of the oppressed is unfathomable and in which his optimism is unconquerable. The rulers, the rich, the ungodly, the violent have it all their own way; they persecute and destroy the righteous, and will continue to do so: but they overlook one fact --- God. He is on the side of the righteous. Though the ungodly flourish as a mighty tree, though this world be so corrupt that reformation is out of the question, -- yet God will intervene, a new world will come, the righteous will come into their inheritance, the holy nation shall be above all nations and the heathen and the ungodly shall perish.

The apocalyptist's pessimism is that of Lowell:

"Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages
but record
One death grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems
and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the
throne, -------"

but his optimism, too, is that of the poet, and herein is his message:

"Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

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